United Nations A/63/32/Add.1

General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-third Session
Supplement No. 32A

28 April 2009

Report of the Committee on Conferences

(7 April 2009)

09-30427 (E) 280409

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1. Pursuant to section IV, paragraph 12, of General Assembly resolution 63/248, the Committee on Conferences, at its organizational session held on 7 April 2009, considered the report of the Secretary-General on action taken to improve the timely submission of documents on peacekeeping financing for the Fifth Committee (A/63/735).[1]

2. Member States reiterated the importance of the timely issuance of documents, commended the efforts of the interdepartmental task force comprising all Secretariat entities involved in the drafting and processing of documents for the second resumed session of the Fifth Committee during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly and welcomed the progress achieved by the task force, including through close interaction among all Secretariat entities concerned, including author entities and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. The Committee was informed that, according to updated statistics as at 6 April 2009, only 4 reports of the 54 reports slotted for the second resumed session of the Fifth Committee had not yet been submitted to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, namely, the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, the report of the Secretary-General on the governance of procurement and the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review and analysis of the Secretariat for managing and maintaining peacekeeping operations, as compared to 8 reports out of 48 reports slotted for the same period the previous year. The Committee was also informed that 45 out of the 54 reports had already been issued to intergovernmental bodies, as compared to 21 out of 48 reports slotted for the same period the previous year. The Committee expressed its appreciation at those encouraging statistics.

3. Member States noted that some level of coordination between author departments and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management predated the establishment of the task force. They therefore wondered what specifically had enabled the task force to achieve positive results where previous efforts had failed, and stressed that the momentum it had generated should not be lost.

4. A representative of the Secretariat indicated that the success of the task force came from its unity of effort. It had brought together representatives of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, all author departments and entities involved in documentation for the Fifth Committee and the secretariats of the Fifth Committee and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The task force had focused its efforts on improving timely issuance of documentation by examining the authoring process, prioritizing work and applying lessons learned. In addition to the three formal meetings of the task force, relevant Secretariat entities, including the secretariats of the Fifth Committee and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, coordinated on a daily basis at the working level. Member States concurred that a multi-pronged approach is required to find a solution to the

[1] The report of the Committee on Conferences on its organizational session will appear in *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/64/32).

perennial difficulties of late issuance of documents for the Fifth Committee, examining the important role of the task force in that matter.

5. Member States commended the fact, as noted in paragraph 4 of the report (A/63/735), that the Department of Field Support applied a more streamlined procedure under which teams were sent to some big and complex peacekeeping missions to help them to prepare reports so as to reduce the need for multiple rounds of exchanges between field missions and Headquarters.

6. Member States discussed as well to what extent the prioritization of those reports affected the processing of slotted documents for other intergovernmental bodies during that period.

7. The Committee wished to have more information on the need for "enough flexibility in the mechanism to allow author departments to respond to unforeseen circumstances", as mentioned in paragraph 21 of the report.

8. A representative of the Secretariat explained that no amount of advance planning could ensure full compliance with the six-week rule for the issuance of pre-session documentation for the Fifth Committee, owing in large part to the limited time, in some cases, between decisions taken by the Fifth Committee and the dates of sessions at which the relevant reports were to be considered.

9. A representative of the Secretariat noted that, in the context of the task force, the Department was committed to informing the secretariats of the Fifth Committee and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions without delay if it found itself unable to issue documents in time for the resumed sessions.

10. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved so far by the task force concerning the timely availability of documents for the Fifth Committee on peacekeeping financing, looks forward to further concerted efforts by the task force aimed at ensuring the timely availability of documents for the Fifth Committee and requests the Secretary-General to include in his comprehensive report further information on the arrangements to handle the documentation of the Fifth Committee at its successive sessions.